

Washington -- President George W. Bush vetoed a children's healthcare measure today (Wednesday) that would have provided insurance coverage for 1.8 million children in California and 10 million children across the nation. The President, who earlier this week turned away children pulling red Radio Flyer wagons full of petitions asking him to sign the bill, then left the capital.

"President Bush's veto of children's healthcare is not compassionate conservatism -- it is moral bankruptcy at its worst," Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA) said.

The bipartisan State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) has been endorsed by 43 state governors from both parties and more than 270 organizations, representing millions of Americans, including the American Medical Association, America's Health Insurance Plans, and Families USA. The program would provide healthcare coverage for 10 million children of low-income, working families with incomes too high to qualify for Medi-Cal, but too low to afford private insurance.

"I am shocked that President Bush and his Republican supporters in Congress could spend \$700 billion for the war in Iraq, but don't think it's a national priority to provide \$35 billion over five years to ensure children have access to healthcare," Rep. Sánchez said. "I'm disappointed we are in a situation where an out-of-touch President, and his few remaining allies in Congress, are able to obstruct the will of the American people."